

DEPREDATIONS AND MASSACRE BY THE SNAKE RIVER
INDIANS.

LETTER

OF

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs relative to the Indian depredations committed in the State of Oregon and Territory of Washington, and the massacre of emigrants by the Snake River Indians.

JANUARY 28, 1861—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
January 25, 1861.

SIR: In response to the resolution of the House of Representatives, directing me, in conjunction with the Secretary of War, to report all information in the possession of the War and Interior Departments "in relation to depredations committed by the Indians in the State of Oregon and the Territory of Washington during the present year, and especially in relation to the late massacre of emigrants by the Snake River Indians, also the relation now existing between the government and said Snake River Indians," I have the honor to submit herewith a copy of the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to whom the resolution was referred, together with copies of certain correspondence connected with the subject.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

MOSES KELLY,
Acting Secretary.

Hon. WILLIAM PENNINGTON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Office of Indian Affairs, January 24, 1861.

SIR: In response to a resolution of the House of Representatives, calling for all information in possession of the War and Indian Departments in relation to depredations committed by the Indians in the State of Oregon and the Territory of Washington during the past year, especially in relation to the late massacre of emigrants by the Snake River Indians, also the relation now existing between the government and said Indians, I have the honor to report:

The enclosed copies of papers give all the information in possession of this office in regard to cases of spoliation within the period specified, and the massacre of emigrants by the Snake Indians.

In regard to the relations between the Snake Indians and the government, no treaty stipulations of any kind whatever have been ever entered into with them, and, of course, they occupy their aboriginal condition; but whether they stand in a peaceful or hostile attitude, the information to be furnished by the War Department will in that regard be more satisfactory, it is presumed, than could be given by this office. The copy of the resolution is herewith returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. B. GREENWOOD, *Commissioner.*

Hon. MOSES KELLY,

Acting Secretary of the Interior.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Portland, Oregon, April 4, 1860.

SIR: I have the honor to forward herewith the spoliation claim of Louis Latour, deceased, late of Pierce county, Washington Territory, for property belonging to him taken and destroyed by Indians during the late Indian war in that Territory, amounting to the sum of \$622.

Of the merits of this claim I know nothing, except what appears on the face of the enclosed papers. The claim is forwarded to this office by W. H. Wood, administrator of deceased's estate.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD R. GEARY,
Superintendent Indian Affairs.

Hon. A. B. GREENWOOD,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

Schedule of property belonging to Louis Latour, of Pierce county, Territory of Washington, taken and destroyed by the Indians engaged in war with the United States in said Territory.

50 bushels wheat, at \$1 50 per bushel.....	\$75 00
100 bushels potatoes, at \$1 per bushel.....	100 00
20 hogs, at \$6 per hog.....	120 00

100 chickens, at 50 cents each.....	\$50 00
5 horses, at \$40 each.....	200 00
Household furniture, beds and bedding, clothing, cooking utensils, and mechanics' tools	50 00
	<hr/>
	595 00
3 saddles and 2 bridles	27 00
	<hr/>
	622 00
	<hr/>

TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON, *County of Pierce* :

Personally appeared before the undersigned, a notary public in and for the county and Territory aforesaid, Louis Latour, who, being first duly sworn, on his oath says that the foregoing schedule is a true statement of property belonging to him taken and destroyed by the Indians engaged in war with the United States some time during the months of May and June, 1856 ; and that he believes that the value, as set forth in said schedule, is reasonable and just, amounting to six hundred and twenty-two dollars.

LOUIS ^{his} + LATOUR.
mark.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of October, A. D. 1856.

[L. s.]

J. M. CHAPMAN,
Notary Public.

TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON, *County of Pierce* :

Personally appeared before the undersigned, a notary public in and for the county and Territory aforesaid, John B Deshan, who, being first duly sworn, on his oath says that he has examined the schedule of property of Louis Latour taken and destroyed by the Indians engaged in war with the United States in said Territory, and, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the same is correct ; that said property was taken and destroyed by the hostile Indians some time during the months of May and June, 1856 ; and this affiant further says that the value of said property, as set forth in said schedule, is reasonable and just.

JOHN B. ^{his} × DESHAN.
mark.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of October, A. D. 1856.

[L. s.]

J. M. CHAPMAN,
Notary Public.

TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON, *set* :

I, Richard D. Gholson, governor of the Territory of Washington, hereby certify that John M. Chapman, before whom the within affidavits of Louis Latour and John B. Deshan were sworn and subscribed on the 30th day of October, A. D. 1856, was at the said date a notary

public in and for the county of Pierce and Territory aforesaid, duly commissioned and qualified ; and that the signature and seal hereto, purporting to be his, are his genuine signature and notarial seal, as appears of record in the office of the secretary of this Territory.

In testimony of all which, I have hereto subscribed my name, and [L. s.] caused the seal of said Territory to be affixed.

Done at Olympia this 5th day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty, and of the independence the eighty-fourth.

R. D. GHOLSON.

R. D. GHOLSON,
Governor and Acting Secretary.

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT, UNITED STATES COURT.

TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON, *County of Jefferson :*

Joseph McKissick, residing in Clallam county, Washington Territory, being first regularly sworn, states, under oath, that he resides on a pre-emption claim located in Sequim Bay, Clallam county, Washington Territory ; that he has been improving the same for the last three years past, and has improved the same. That on or about the month of March or April, A. D. 1859, a number of Indians belonging to the Clallam tribe did take from his fence about one thousand rails and use the same for firewood, said rails being worth forty dollars per thousand.

JOSEPH MCKISSICK.

Sworn to before me this 2d day of August, A. D. 1859.

[L. s.]

ROB'T C. HILL, *Clerk.*

Per J. H. VAN BOKKELER, *Deputy.*

Thomas J. Smallfield, being duly sworn, states, under oath, that he was employed during the months of March and April, A. D. 1859, in Sequim Bay, and that he saw Indians taking rails from the fence of J. McKissick for the purpose of making fire.

THOS. J. SMALLFIELD.

Sworn to before me this 2d day of August, A. D. 1859.

[L. s.]

ROB'T C. HILL, *Clerk.*

Per J. H. VAN BOKKELER, *Deputy.*

Aurelius Colby, being duly sworn, states, under oath, that during the months of March and April, A. D. 1859, he was working at Sequim Bay, near the pre-emption claim of Joseph McKissick ; that he, at various times, saw the Indians take rails from the fence of said McKissick, and use them to make fire with.

A. COLBY.

Sworn to before me this 2d day of August, A. D. 1859.

[L. s.]

ROB'T C. HILL,

Clerk U. S. Dist. Court, 3d Dist.

Per J. H. VAN BOKKELER, *Deputy.*

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Portland, Oregon, January 5, 1860.

SIR: I have the pleasure of enclosing you herewith a copy of a communication from Captain H. D. Wallen, U. S. A., presenting much interesting and valuable information respecting the country and Indians upon his route last summer, between Fort Dalles, Oregon, and the valley of the Great Salt Lake, while in command of the wagon road expedition.

From the best sources of information at my command, I am led to concur with Captain Wallen in opinion, with regard to the Indians who made the destructive attack on the "Warm Spring reservation" on the 6th of August last, and to believe that Agent Dennison was mistaken in his statement that Howlark, the noted chief from the vicinity of Fort Boisé, was present with his warriors, and in command of the assailants on that occasion. The attacking force were, I am satisfied, Digger Snakes from "Crooked river" and the "Big Basin;" and as these Indians, though noted thieves, are little formidable as warriors, being in possession of few horses, and armed, with few exceptions, with primitive bows and spears, their military prowess has given them little notoriety. It will be remembered that these root and cricket eaters are a very different people from the "Mountain Snakes" or "Bannacks."

No subsequent information has corroborated the statement of Dr. Fitch in regard to the imposing force of Indians mounted on United States dragoon horses, red shirted and armed, to a great extent, with United States rifles and dragoon swords, so as to excite the solicitude of the good doctor for the safety of Captain Wallen's command. He may be correct as to numbers, but in other respects he was doubtlessly misled by an excited imagination. Protected as he and his four comrades were by a well-constructed block-house, with an ample supply of provisions and ammunition, and forty stand of United States rifles, besides small arms, they might, and ought to, have defended the agency even against Howlark and his warriors, had they been present, much more against the Digger Snakes. The flight of these men from the block-house was ill-advised, and exposed them to the only real danger.

The Warm Spring reservation was much annoyed for a considerable period prior to the attack on the 6th of August last by the predatory visits of the thievish Snakes, and should have had military protection. The exciting cause of the final assault was doubtlessly that suggested by Captain Wallen, a desire to revenge the slaughter of several of their tribe on the John Day river by the reservation Indians led on by Doctor Fitch. While the effort of the doctor to recover stolen property was proper, his participation in the killing I regard as most censurable. Had Agent Dennison been in direct personal charge of the Warm Spring reservation, making his headquarters there, instead of committing it to the charge of an irresponsible subordinate, in all probability the annoyances and final disaster would never have happened. Within the last month the Wasco Indians have generally returned to the reservation, and Sub-Agent Abbott, in temporary charge of Colonel Dennison's district during his absence on

the Atlantic side, is now, in compliance with my instructions, (see enclosed paper A,) residing at that point. The small military guard placed there by General Harney's orders last August was withdrawn early in the winter.

Without expressing concurrence with Captain Wallen's views as to the abandonment of the reservation provided for the Walla-Wallas and Cayuses, or as to the selection of those he recommends, I fully concur as to the necessity of collecting the Indians of eastern Oregon on judiciously selected reservations at an early day. Delay in this matter must inevitably result seriously to the worthy and adventurous pioneers of civilization now beginning to occupy the attractive valleys along the western base of the Blue mountains, and also to the already waning native tribes.

Economy of expenditure, good morals and humanity, demand for Captain Wallen's suggestion, regarding the separation of the military posts from the Indian reservations, the highest appreciation. I have also long held views coincident with his, as to the most economical and efficient mode of extending the protection of the army to the annual immigration over the plains to the Pacific slope of the continent.

In regard to the reservations provided for by treaty in middle Oregon, some important changes in their location and boundaries will be important. I purpose a tour in a few days as far east as Walla-Walla, and will have this subject in special view.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

EDWARD R. GEARY,
Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Hon. A. B. GREENWOOD,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

FORT VANCOUVER,
Washington Territory, December 10, 1859.

SIR: On my last visit at Portland I had the pleasure of an interview, and promised that I would give you a short description of my trip last summer, embracing such points of interest as might be useful to you as superintendent of Indian affairs.

As but little was known of the country lying to the south and east from the Dalles, I determined, before starting out on my last trip, to shape my course in that direction, with the view of mapping the country, developing its resources, and seeing the different Indian tribes who inhabit the valleys of that region. I found the route between the Dalles and Warm Spring reservation a difficult country for the construction of a good wagon road, but excellent for pack animals; the construction of a road for wheel vehicles between the points named will involve much labor and expense.

The first Indians encountered on my trip were near the forks of Crooked river, about one hundred and eighteen miles east of the Warm Spring reservation. These Indians are the Digger Snakes, inhabiting the valley of Crooked river and the adjacent valleys; some-

times extending their camp as far north as the headwaters of John Day's river, and as far south as the "Two Buttes," near the headwaters of the Des Chutes river. They subsist almost entirely on roots, insects, and fish taken from the numerous cool streams flowing from the mountains surrounding the valley of Crooked river on either side. Crooked river empties into the Des Chutes about forty miles south of the Warm Spring reservation.

I do not consider these Indians formidable, for the reason that, with few exceptions, they are armed with the bow and arrow, and, as they have no intercourse with the whites, they are not provided with guns and ammunition. I am under the impression that these were the Indians who not long since made the attack on the reservation, as they are numerous and lie contiguous to it, having their greatest number of lodges south of the reservation, and between the "Buttes" named above. I am also inclined to think that this act was in retaliation for the attack made on several of their lodges, near the headwaters of John Day's river, by the reservation Indians, not very long preceding their descent upon the reserve at the Warm Springs. I consider these Digger Snakes the most expert thieves that I have ever met; in other respects they are harmless, except to very small parties travelling through their country. The next Indians met were those living in the "Big Basin," about one hundred and twenty miles further east. This basin extends for seventy miles, north and south, along the base of the Blue mountains, and for forty miles in a westerly direction, shut in on every side by precipitous mountains, those lying to the southward being covered with perpetual snow.

Skirting the Blue mountains, and for six or ten miles in width, is the most luxuriant grass I have ever seen, capable of supporting numberless herds of cattle. We saw none, however, while in this basin; and the presumption is, that these Indians are very poor, being entirely without stock of any kind. We remained there several days, and must have seen their traces had any existed. These Indians were of the same class as the Digger Snakes of Crooked River valley, clad in skins, and using the bow and arrow. They are very shy of the white man; could not be induced to visit my camp, but communicated with me through friendly Indians. I sent one white man with the friendly Indians to act as an interpreter, and to observe their manners and customs. They subsist principally on insects and roots; had very little knowledge of the existence of white people—the white man with them was more a fiction or tradition than a reality. A month after I left the basin these same Indians, numbering a hundred or more, made an attack on two of my express riders, capturing two mules, with all their provisions and ammunition. They used bows and arrows, and must have killed the men, but that the wind was adverse to the flight of the arrows; they were kept from close quarters by the rifle and revolvers of the white men. These Indians cannot be very formidable, else they certainly would not have allowed those two men to escape, situated as they were, hundreds of miles from assistance.

I know of no place, either in Oregon or Washington Territory, so well calculated for an Indian reservation as this basin. It is large in

extent, has an abundance of good land, wood, water, and grass of the most nutritious character.

This valley can be reached with wagons by my new road (established last summer) in eleven or twelve days, and in five days on horseback. It is sufficiently extensive for grazing and agricultural purposes for large numbers of Indians, and the climate must be mild, shut in as the valley is on every side by lofty mountains.

I would recommend this spot to your favorable notice; its remoteness from the settlements, separating the Indians from the pernicious influences of the white man, makes it particularly desirable for the purposes of a reservation. It is an established fact, that Indians in their intercourse with the whites imbibe all their vices, but learn nothing that is virtuous or good. Besides this, there are several beautiful valleys between the Dalles and the basin soon to be filled up by our population, and it will be necessary to collect all these Indians and place them within certain limits for the security of both parties. The basin as a reservation will be sufficiently near the military posts at the Dalles and Walla-Walla for all purposes of protection; it is much better to have the posts separated from the reservations by an interval of at least ten or twelve days' march than to have the troops in their immediate vicinity.

[The next Indians met were those fishing at the Salmon Falls, on Snake river, east of the Blue mountains; these were the Bannack Snake Indians, athletic men, well armed and formidable. Doubtless these Indians are in the habit of visiting the valley of the Great Salt Lake, and derive their supply of arms and ammunition from that source.

While on Bear river, at the entrance of the valley of the Great Salt Lake, I met a chief of one of the Bannack Snake bands, his band living in the Goose Creek mountains, who spoke broken English. He could have learned this nowhere else, as he has never had intercourse with white people living west of the Blue mountains. These Bannack Snakes are very numerous and formidable, roving about in bands of 60 or 70, and not having been impressed with the prowess of the white man, are constantly annoying small parties of emigrants passing through their country. They extend from old Fort Boisé, on Snake river, for several hundred miles along the river, both on the north and south side of it, extending their depredations as far south as the California road. During the past summer they were particularly troublesome to those emigrants going to California, and nothing but the presence of General Harney's troops on the Oregon route prevented similar annoyances to those destined to this country.

The emigration to Oregon and Washington Territory came through these hostile tribes unmolested, from the foresight of the general commanding this department in having his troops on the route at an early day to meet them, and affording them the required protection to reach their new homes in peace and safety. I would respectfully suggest that expeditions of a similar character be made every season, having the same object in view. The troops from Utah to be sent to meet the emigration, and turn them over to the expeditions from this department, meeting in Raft or Swamp Creek valley, where there is

an abundance of grass for large encampments. This will supersede the necessity of maintaining small remote posts, so expensive to government. My convictions are, that in this way the emigration can be protected every season in the most perfect manner, and at very little expense, the troops returning to convenient winter quarters, where they can be cheaply subsisted after this important service is performed. Little posts occupied by one or two companies are inadequate to this service; the commands being small, it is not possible to detach many men at one time as an escort to the emigrants. Troops moving about in large bodies inspire the Indians with respect; whereas if they are pent up in small stockade forts, they are not regarded with much fear by formidable marauding bands of Indians. For the Umatilla and Walla-Walla Indians I would suggest the Grand Ronde as an excellent site for a reservation, much better than their present position. This beautiful valley is twenty miles long and twelve wide, and, from the intimacy of these tribes by intermarriage and otherwise, they would, without doubt, live harmoniously together.

Their present reservations are immediately in the white settlements, exerting a pernicious influence on both the whites and Indians.

At the Grand Ronde there is an abundance of wood, water, and grass, with more arable land than the two tribes will ever want; and their proximity to the military posts at Walla-Walla and Fort Dalles, five and ten days' travel, is all-sufficient for their control.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. D. WALLEN,

Capt. 4th Infantry, Comd'g Expedition.

The SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

For Oregon and Washington Territory.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Portland, Oregon, November 7, 1859.

SIR: You are authorized and instructed by this office to proceed without delay to the Dalles, to relieve Agent A. P. Dennison, and enter temporarily on the charge of the eastern district of this superintendency.

You will receive from Agent Dennison all the public moneys and property in his hands, in virtue of his office, with a statement of funds and invoice of property in triplicate, and will therefor execute to him triplicate receipts.

The absence of Agent Dennison will probably not extend beyond three months. While in charge of his district I wish you, if deemed safe, to reside at the Warm Springs reservation, and use all peaceable means for restoring amicable relations between the "Snake" Indians and those of the reservation, and prevent all hostile forays in either direction. If possible to confer with the Snakes, endeavor to convince them of the folly of persisting in their hostile and predatory course, and that the United States will most certainly punish them for their

attacks on the Indians placed on our reservations, and in amity with us, as promptly as if the offence was directly against our white citizens. Could you induce them to adopt the peace policy and restore the women and children captured from the reservation, it will have the happiest effect on the reserve Indians, who could thus be readily induced to return to the reservation. But unless freed from their too just apprehensions of slaughter and robbery by their treacherous neighbors, we can scarcely, in good faith, ask their return.

You will improve all opportunities to discover the state of feeling towards both whites and Indians on the part of the "Snakes," and to fathom their plans for the future, and fully advise this office thereon at the earliest possible moment. This will be important to enable the proper authorities to determine the amount of military protection that may be required.

You will also ascertain, from time to time, the condition of the Cayuses and Walla-Walla Indians, who are within the eastern district.

As your care of this district is only temporary, you will, as far as may be, in accordance with the foregoing instructions, carry out the measures of Agent Dennison. You will be careful to keep this office posted on all important occurrences within your charge.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD R. GEARY,
Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

GEO. H. ABBOTT, Esq.,
Sub-Indian Agent.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Portland, Oregon, November 7, 1860.

SIR: It is at length in my power to communicate authentic information in regard to the heart-rending tragedy of the 9th September, to which I referred in my letter to your office of the 4th ultimo. This terrible disaster occurred about fifty miles below Salmon Falls, on the emigrant route to Oregon. The company consisted of forty-four persons—seventeen men and twenty-seven women and children—of whom fifteen, after privations seldom paralleled in the annals of human suffering, are known to survive and have been rescued.

Of the others, the larger number are known to have fallen in their gallant defence, which lasted thirty-four hours against an overwhelming force, or in their efforts to escape when compelled by thirst to abandon the protection afforded by their wagons. Two men were overtaken and slain, near the head of John Day's river. If any of the missing still survive, it is feared they are in captivity to the most cruel and brutal monsters that wear the human form, and are enduring indignities and tortures from which death would be a most welcome refuge.

The names of the survivors are Snyder, a discharged soldier, who succeeded in reaching the camp of Mr. Cole, as stated in my former letter; Jacob and Joseph Keith, who found their way to the Umatilla

agency ; and Mr. Munson ; Mr. Jeffrey ; Joseph Myers, wife and five children ; Mrs. Chase, (wife of Daniel Chase,) and one child ; and Miss Trimble—twelve persons—rescued by the command of Captain Dent of the army.

Captain Dent found those whom he had the good fortune to rescue in the most forlorn condition. They were in a state of perfect nudity, having been stripped by the savages and left to perish. For ten days they had subsisted on the bodies of the dead. When discovered, on the 27th of October, near the bank of a small stream, they were in a state of extreme emaciation, their bones almost protruding from their skin. On seeing their deliverers, the women and children fell on their knees, and in the most piteous accents implored food. But I will not pain you by attempting a further recital of sufferings not to be imagined by any who have not been overtaken by a similar calamity. A thrill of horror and of the deepest sympathy vibrates through the whole country, and the universal voice demands that the protection of the government be no longer withheld from our citizens in a district so often and so deeply stained with the blood of the emigrant.

This terrible affair has occurred not far from the scene of the horrible massacre of the Wards and their party, in the autumn of 1854 ; a detailed account of which, as well as of other outrages by the same savage perpetrators, will be found in the correspondence of this office, on the files of the Indian bureau.

It is now demonstrated that no adequate protection can be given to the immigration to this coast, short of the establishment of one or more military posts in the heart of the Snake country, at points whence the routes of travel can be constantly guarded, and the several wintering places of the Indians driven by the snows from the mountains can readily be reached. These Indians should not be permitted to escape punishment for their past cruelties, and must be taught to respect our power which they now hold in contempt.

I have no doubt that the importance and necessity of adequate military protection to the immigrant routes to Oregon and Washington will be strongly urged by the present efficient head of this military department, and that the energetic efforts of the Indian office will be directed to the attainment of the same object. Without it, immigration by land to this country from the Atlantic States will virtually cease, every enterprise tending to its development languish, and untold losses, social, moral and commercial, result.

Enclosed herewith is a copy of the report of Sub-Agent Abbott, and of a letter to that officer from Captain A. J. Smith, U. S. A.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD R. GEARY,
Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

A. B. GREENWOOD,
Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C.

UMATILLA AGENCY, OREGON,
October 30, 1860.

SIR: Your communication dated October 10, authorizing and directing me to act in behalf of the Indian department in the case of the late massacre of immigrants by the Snake Indians, was received duly; and I have to inform you that your instructions were anticipated to the best that could be done by this agency in affording relief to any who might have survived; but in vain, as our relief party found none of the immigrants.

The following are the particulars of that horrid affair as far as heard from, up to the present.

The train consisting of eight wagons and forty-four souls was escorted by troops from the camp on Port Neuf river to a point about three days' travel above Salmon Falls. From the camp at which the troops started on their return, to the point at which the Indians stopped the train, nothing of importance occurred, although the attitude of the Indians at Salmon Falls was threatening.

The Indians attacked the train on the 9th of September, about noon, some fifty miles below Salmon Falls, and one hundred rods from Snake river. The train was corralled, and the immigrants defended themselves about thirty hours, in which time four men were killed and some of the party wounded, as were also some of the Indians.

Want of water compelled the Indians to break the corral and try to reach the river, when the fire of the Indians became so destructive as to drive them from their wagons and force them into a precipitate flight. Then Elijah Otter, who had been wounded previously, received a second and mortal wound, and his daughter Mary was shot while getting out of the wagon. The father and daughter were left dying, and Mrs. Otter and three children, two girls and a boy, refused to leave them, and they fell into the hands of the savages.

Gressey, Lawson, Aulsley, and Keshner, were killed before the corral was broke, and John Myers immediately after.

The party thus decimated escaped from the Indians, who were too busy plundering the train to follow them. But the next day the Indians were seen watching them, and signal fires were lighted.

Four of the discharged soldiers who had joined the train at Port Neuf left the train in the heat of the engagement, mounted and attempted to make their escape. The Keiths left the party at the moment of abandoning the train, and came up with the discharged soldiers the next day, and travelled with them till they struck the foot of the Blue mountains, where the road they were following, being that up the Malheur, was lost. They, with one of the discharged soldiers, returned to the main road where it crosses the Malheur, where they found a man (Monson) and a boy; the boy one of the Otter family. These two told them that they had travelled with the main party up to five days previous, when they left them in a destitute condition, but they expected them to reach the Malheur in a few days.

The discharged soldier killed his horse and the party prepared the flesh, and left the boy with it at the Malheur, while the four pushed on to Rum river.

Salmon being plentiful and easily taken in the stream, two of the party stopped to fish until the main party should arrive. The two Keiths then pushed on to the agency where they arrived in a very sorry condition and greatly exhausted, on the 2d of the month, just twenty-two days after the massacre.

The three discharged soldiers who attempted to cross the Blue mountains high up the Malheur were attacked by Indians on what is supposed to be the headwaters of John Day's river, and two of them killed. The third, Snyder, was found on the road between Willow creek and John Day's river, which point he had reached at a critical moment, as starvation and thirst were fast doing their work.

Mr. Dawes, who was in charge of this agency during my absence, (it was previous to my arrival here,) sent two men, well mounted, with one pack animal, on the night of the arrival of the Keiths, to travel day and night, to furnish immediate assistance to such as might be found, and the next day a wagon started with supplies for all, and to bring in the exhausted.

The advance party went down Rum river about forty miles, and near to the point at which the two were left to fish, without meeting any one. They found tracks of women and children, apparent, some of whom wore shoes; and, thinking that they had passed the party, they started on their return, and took great care in searching the country, but failed to find any one. They arrived here on the eighth day worn out and discouraged, having travelled night and day, hoping to see the fires lighted by the sufferers by night.

Captain Dent, 9th infantry, commanding a detachment of troops, left his camp at the foot of the Blue mountains, about five miles from this agency, on the 14th of the month, *en route* to the scene of the massacre. He is a prompt, energetic, and efficient officer, and is actuated by a proper spirit, as are also the officers and men under him; and if it is in the power of man to accomplish aught for the benefit of any of the survivors of the party, if any exist, he will do it. I sent Jacob Keith, who is now in my employ, with the expedition. I have this day sent an express to Walla-Walla to ascertain if any intelligence has been received at that point from Captain Dent, and will give you the result in this communication.

This is a most sad affair, but I will refrain from comment, and confine my report to facts as they are developed. The foregoing particulars of the massacre I get from the Keith brothers, and the fate of the two discharged soldiers is given by Snyder. I send you a list of the names of the emigrant party.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. W. ABBOTT,
Sub-Indian Agent.

EDWARD R. GEARY, Esq.,
Sup't Indian Affairs, Oregon and Washington.

NOVEMBER 1, 1860.

P. S.—The express has just arrived from Walla-Walla with intelligence of the recovery by Captain Dent of twelve of the lost immigrants. I refer you to the enclosed letter from Captain Smith.

WALLA-WALLA, *W. T.*, October 31, 1860.

DEAR SIR: An express has just arrived from Captain Dent, bringing us the gratifying news of the recovery of twelve of the lost emigrants—four men, two women, and six children. They were found in a deplorable condition, quite naked and starved, having subsisted on berries, and, as a last resort, on the remains of one of their own party who had died some days previous. Captain Dent will be on the Umatilla about Sunday or Monday next, when you can get the full particulars from him. We send out three wagons to-morrow with vegetables, clothing, and other articles for the sufferers, and hope to give them a warm reception. There is no truth in the report that two women came in on Day's creek.

Yours truly,

A. J. SMITH.

G. H. ABBOTT, Esq.,
Umatilla Agency, Oregon.

List of the names of the immigrants of the train attacked by the Snake Indians.

Elijah P. Otter, wife, and ten children; Joseph Myers, wife, and five children; Daniel Chase, wife, and three children; A. Manorman, wife, and five children, (some of the young ladies were from twelve to twenty years old;); Samuel Gleason, Monson, Louis Lawson, Judson Gressey, Jacob Keith, Joseph Keith, John Myers, Charles Keshner, discharged soldier from Camp Port Neuf, William Aultby, Schamberg, Snyder, Murdock, Jeffrey.

The following named persons are saved; the balance are either killed or yet missing:

Mr. Jeffrey, Mr. Munson, Mr. Myers, wife, and five children; Mr. Chase and one child; Miss Trimble, Mr. Snyder, and Messrs. Jacob and Joseph Keith; together, fifteen persons.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Portland, Oregon, March 7, 1860.

SIR: I herewith enclose the spoliation claim of Eli Hathaway of Whidby's island, Washington Territory; the amount whereof is one hundred dollars, being for eleven hogs belonging to said Hathaway, said to have been killed by the Skagit tribe of Indians at different times between the 1st of September and the 12th of November, 1859.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD R. GEARY,
Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Hon. A. B. GREENWOOD,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington City, D. C.

WHIDBY'S ISLAND,
Washington Territory, November 12, 1859.

The United States to Eli Hathaway, Dr.

To 11 hogs killed by the Skagit tribe of Indians from the 1st
of September, 1859, to date..... \$100 00

Eli Hathaway, a resident of Island county, in the Territory of Washington, being first duly sworn, says that the above account of hogs killed by the Skagit tribe of Indians, whose locality has been, and is at present, on and about Whidby's island, in the county and Territory aforesaid, is just and true; that the amount charged therefor is reasonable and just; and that the said number of hogs were killed by the said tribe of Indians aforesaid; and that being unable to obtain any compensation from the aforesaid Indians, he now presents the above account to the United States for payment, the amount being now due and unpaid, as above stated.

ELI HATHAWAY.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 14th day of November, A. D. 1859. In testimony whereof, I hereunto set my name and affix the adopted seal of the probate court of Island county, Washington Territory, this 14th day of November, A. D. 1859, there being no other seal provided for by the court.

[L. s.]

JOHN Y. SEWELL,
Probate Judge.

G. P. Knight, of Island county, in the Territory of Washington, being first duly sworn, says that he is in no way interested in the account hereunto annexed, and that he is personally acquainted with Eli Hathaway, and knows that the number of hogs, as set forth in said account, the property of Eli Hathaway, were killed by the Skagit tribe of Indians in this county, from the 1st day of September, 1859, to November 12, 1859, and that they were of the value stated in the account aforesaid.

G. P. KNIGHT.

Sworn and subscribed to before me this 14th day of November, A. D. 1859. In testimony whereof, I hereunto set my name and affix the adopted seal of the probate court of Island county, Washington Territory, there being no other seal for the court, this 14th day of November, A. D. 1859.

[L. s.]

JOHN Y. SEWELL,
Probate Judge.

John Condra, of Island county, in the Territory of Washington, being first duly sworn, says that he is in no way interested in the account hereunto annexed, and that he is personally acquainted with Eli Hathaway, and knows that the number of hogs, as set forth in said accounts, the property of Eli Hathaway, were killed by the "Skagit tribe of Indians" in this county, from the 1st day of September, 1859, to the 12th day of November, 1859, and that they were of the value stated in the account aforesaid.

JOHN CONDRA.

Sworn and subscribed before me this 14th day of November, A. D. 1859. In testimony whereof, I hereunto set my name and affix the adopted seal of the probate court of Island county, Washington Territory, there being no other seal for the court, this — day of November, A. D. 1859.

[L. S.]

JOHN Y. SEWELL,
Probate Judge.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Portland, Oregon, October 4, 1860.

SIR: It is my painful duty to communicate to you that reliable intelligence has reached this office of the massacre of a large company of immigrants near the Salmon Falls of Salmon river by the Digger Snakes. The company consisted of 46 persons—men, women, and children—*en route* for Oregon, of whom forty five are supposed to have fallen victims to savage barbarity. Mr. Shreider alone escaped, and after enduring the greatest privations, and travelling day and night for a whole week, succeeded in reaching the camp of Mr. George E. Cole, on Willow creek, about 100 miles east of the Dalles, in middle Oregon.

The command of Major Grier (two companies of dragoons) spent several weeks in the region where this tragedy is alleged to have occurred, without finding the Indians anywhere in force, or discovering evidence of their being numerous in that vicinity. Supposing the immigration to have generally, if not entirely, passed the region of peril, he returned with his command to their quarters at Fort Walla-Walla. Scarcely had his return been accomplished before the occurrence of this barbarous slaughter of our citizens, who, after accomplishing their long pilgrimage over the plains, were destined to fall by the murderous hand of the relentless savage on the confines of the country of their destination. I may here also state that the command of Major Steen had only a few days returned to Fort Dalles from his campaign into the Snake country, in the vicinity of Harney (Malheur) lake, before the aggressions of these marauders were recommenced on the Warm Spring reservation, and forty horses belonging to the friendly Indians at that point driven away.

Apprehensions are now seriously entertained by Agent Dennison that an attack by a large body of these marauders is impending, and that unless military protection be speedily afforded the reservation will be desolated.

I have already communicated with Colonel Wright, commanding the department, in regard to these frontier troubles, and have, no doubt his experience and energy will prompt him, at the earliest moment practicable, to make such a disposition of the forces as will prevent further disasters, and punish these miscreants.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD R. GEARY,
Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

Hon. A. B. GREENWOOD,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C.